



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

Help Kids Make Healthy Food Choices with ChooseMyPlate



The Challenge



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that approximately 17 percent of American children could be classified as obese as of 2010. Obesity represents a well-known risk factor for type 2 diabetes, and this epidemic in childhood obesity has led to a surge in type 2 diabetes diagnoses in teens and even younger children. You can help children live healthier lives by creating a service project to teach children and their families about healthy food choices.

This toolkit will help you to address this community need by:

- Explaining associated terms
- Highlighting helpful resources
- Sharing effective planning steps
- Outlining project management tips
- Providing ideas for communicating your message
- Sharing tips for reflection and reporting



Prepare

Learn Associated Terms

Before you jump-start the planning phase of your project, be sure you know the terms associated with the work you are about to do.

- ***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):*** The CDC is the U.S. health protection agency, protecting from health and safety threats both foreign and domestic. It is dedicated to protecting health



and promoting quality of life through the prevention and control of disease, injury, and disability. The CDC also publishes helpful statistics about the current state of health in the U.S.

- **Obesity:** Obesity is a label for a range of weight that is greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. The terms also identify a range of weight that has been shown to increase the likelihood of certain diseases and other health problems.

Identify a Location

Meet kids where they are in your community by connecting with schools, after school programs, community centers, and faith-based youth programs and tell them that you want to offer healthy eating classes for kids.

Contact your State Agency for Child Nutrition Programs (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>) , to find sites that already serve as Summer Food Service Program hosts. Ask them if they might want to partner with you for an MLK Day project to help kids make healthy food choices.

Select a location that is easily accessible via public transportation or within walking distance of the places where people live, learn, worship or play such as public housing, schools, houses of worship, or community recreation centers.

Browse Helpful Resources

- State Agency Child Nutrition Programs (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>)
- Choose My Plate (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-on-budget.html>)
 - Children Over Five (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/children-over-five.html>)
 - Whole Grain Lesson (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/WholeGrainLesson.pdf>)
 - Whole Grain Word Scramble (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/WholeGrainScramble.pdf>)
 - Kid Friendly Fruit and Veg (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet11KidFriendlyVeggiesAndFruits.pdf>)
- USDA Team Nutrition (<http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/>)
 - Teacher's Guides (<http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/servingupmyplate.htm#guides>)
 - Songs that teach nutrition (<http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/servingupmyplate.htm#songs>)
 - Posters (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/servingupmyplate.htm#poster>)
 - Parent handout (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/servingupmyplate.htm#handout>)
 - Nutrition games (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/servingupmyplate.htm#extras>)
- Nutritional information (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NutritionLabels.pdf>)
- Let's Move (<http://www.letsmove.gov/eat-healthy>)

- [Eat Healthy](http://www.letsmove.gov/eat-healthy) (<http://www.letsmove.gov/eat-healthy>)
- [Kids](http://www.letsmove.gov/kids) (<http://www.letsmove.gov/kids>)
- [USDA Gleaning Toolkit](http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf) (http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf)
- [Post your project](http://mlkday.gov/serve/register.php) (<http://mlkday.gov/serve/register.php>)
- [Summer Food Service Programs](http://www.fns.usda.gov/summer-food-service-program-sfsp) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/summer-food-service-program-sfsp>)
- [Create Community Gardens](http://mlkday.gov/plan/actionguides/nourish.php) (<http://mlkday.gov/plan/actionguides/nourish.php>)
- [Child Nutrition Programs](http://www.fns.usda.gov/child-nutrition-programs) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/child-nutrition-programs>)
- [Farmer's Market Programs](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp>)
- [Food Banks and Pantries](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/>)
- [SNAP](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/>)
- [Spirit of Service Curriculum](http://www.scholastic.com/MLKDay/) (<http://www.scholastic.com/MLKDay/>)
 - [Grades 3-5](http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3757657) (<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3757657>)
 - [Grades 6-8](http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3757658) (<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3757658>)
- [Serve.gov Toolkit: Promote Back to School Health](http://www.serve.gov/?q=site-page/toolkits/kids-health/index-started) (<http://www.serve.gov/?q=site-page/toolkits/kids-health/index-started>)



Plan

A successful group effort requires a motivated team whose members agree upon clearly defined tasks, set reachable goals, and act with inspiration and purpose.

Build a Team

- Start off planning with folks you know, and ask them to tell others to join your efforts.
- Meet regularly, especially as MLK Day approaches.
- Assign concrete tasks to keep everyone motivated and on track.
- As you work, talk about the parallels between Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s impact and your own.

Set Goals



Build your planning team

Whether you are a team of few or many, a planning team will help you execute all aspects of your project. Below are some roles your planning team can take on. If it's only you: reach out to volunteers past and present to fulfill these roles:

- Project Development
- Volunteer Recruitment and Management Team
- Communications Team
- VIP/Leadership Engagement Team
- Fundraising Team
- Event Team

- Set goals, such as number of people trained, items supplied, and folks pledging to pass along what they've learned to others.
- Record these goals and make sure you can meet them. Ensure you and your team choose goals you can all agree on.

Plan Your Project

There are a number of activities to consider when preparing to teach kids to make healthy food choices in your community. Here are a few planning ideas to look into:

- ChooseMyPlate lesson and activities (Resources included above):
- Remember to make this fun for the kids by using instruction, games, songs, coloring and repetition. Make things age-appropriate for your participants.
- As instruction takes place, have trained volunteers circulate the room to make sure kids and parents are engaged and having fun.
- Food Preparation activities:
 - If you are doing a food demonstration, have volunteers do food preparation such as cleaning, sorting, measuring, or laying out nutritional information prior to participants' arrival.
 - You may want to start by talking about buying the ingredients used in preparing the healthy, kid-friendly meal on a budget.
 - At the end of the lesson, incorporate a community meal that brings together volunteers and participants to eat the food they just made.
- Consider incorporating other related activities:
 - Purchase a large canvas tarp and markers, lay it on the floor and have groups of kids draw what they learned about healthy food. Give the tarp to the venue as a thank you gift for using the space and an ongoing reminder about eating healthy food for their constituents.
 - Share information with parents (using the resources listed above) about programs that provide food assistance throughout the year or other nutritional projects in which groups can participate.
 - Send home kid-friendly recipes and nutritional information, as well as information about Dr. King to help your participants eat well and reflect on Dr. King's teachings long after MLK Day.
 - If you do any food preparation, make sure volunteers are assigned to clean-up duty as the lesson progresses to

keep the environment sanitary and safe for the youth participants

- [Incorporate learning into any service you do \(node/292\)](#) by sharing information about the issues your project addresses and about Dr. King's work and teachings as it relates to the issue.

Raise Resources and Equipment/Supplies

Involving and engaging kids

Whether kids show up to volunteer or they unexpectedly arrive with parents who can benefit from your service, have activities that they can do such as:

- Carry light objects
- Decorate cards, lunch bags, or placemats
- Serve refreshments to the adults hard at work
- Organize or tidy the project spaces
- Watch a film about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

See [Engaging Kids in Service \(node/296\)](#) for more on kid-friendly service projects.

What supplies will you need to promote the ChooseMyPlate to kids in your community?

- Seek financial and in-kind donations from businesses for the supplies you'll need to run your project
- Solicit funds from team members and/or others to purchase items you need for successful MLK Day
- Purchase the necessary supplies prior to the service day so they're ready to go on MLK Day.

Manage your Project

The following tips will assist you with managing a successful service project.

- Utilize to do lists for the days leading up to, day of and post event day.
- Make sure team leaders or coordinators are at the site early, the site is set up, and they are ready to greet volunteers or community members as they arrive.
- Even if some volunteers will be doing door-to-door distribution of materials, it is important that the group start off the day together and review what you are trying to accomplish.
- Officially welcome everyone and talk about the purpose of the event: promoting ChooseMyPlate and healthy eating for kids to the community in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Organize volunteers into different work teams. For example, have different people greeting participants, handing out refreshments, responding to questions, or distributing materials.

- Build moments of reflection into your planned activities. Share stories and words from Dr. King and about any insights you've gained so far [about the connection between your service and Dr. King's teachings \(node/292\)](#).
- Document the day with photos and videos and be sure to have participants sign a photo release form.
- Conduct your event, offering continuous encouragement to participants.



Communicate Your Message

Communication is a key part of any service project. You will need to communicate about:

- Getting volunteers to help you plan or implement your service activity
- Building Partnerships with potential collaborators or supporters
- Raising funds or in-kind donations for your project
- Informing potential participants who might benefit from your service



Publicize your event using a combination of low-tech outreach, traditional, and social media.

Low-tech Outreach

- Post flyers in public places
- Use community bulletin boards
- Ask area businesses to spread the word (e.g. flyers at registers or posters in store windows)
- Make announcements at schools, churches, or civic groups

Traditional Media

- Invite the news media (print and broadcast) to report about your upcoming event or to attend and share information about accomplishments. Use a [press release \(node/252\)](#) or a [media advisory \(node/252\)](#).
- Make follow-up phone calls to the news media
- Place free ads in the community affairs section of your local papers

Digital and Social Media

- Submit your event to local online calendars and LISTSERVs
- Promote your project, and document the day, through Facebook, Tweets, and pictures
- Reach out to a local blogger and ask if he/she might cover the event



Assess and Reflect

Host an official debriefing meeting for team members after the service day. Ask the team to reflect on the following questions:

- Examine the goals you set for yourselves. Which ones did you meet? Which exceeded your expectations? And which goals did you not quite reach?
- What did you accomplish?
- Who did your work impact in your community?
- What went well and what could be improved for next time?
- What ChooseMyPlate and other healthy eating resources or outreach methods for kids would you use again in the future? Which ones would you forego?
- Consider what doing this work on MLK Day, in particular, meant to your community.
- Go back to your initial investigation into the local problems you elected to help tackle and ask more questions. For example: If you planned one ChooseMyPlate lesson for kids in your community, what else could you provide as follow-up that would help kids in your community think about healthy eating more often? What organizations or programs in your community could you partner with to offer future lessons and guidance?



Share Your Story

We know you might not like to brag, but please do! You may inspire others to organize a ChooseMyPlate event once they hear what you accomplished. Share your service accomplishments with:

- Volunteers, financial and in-kind supporters and constituents groups; the accomplishments could accompany a thank you letter
- The media; thank all media who reported on your planned activities or covered your service project along with sharing accomplishments from the project and any plans for the future
- The Corporation for National and Community Service; learn about multiple ways to [share your story](http://www.serve.gov/?q=site-page/share) (<http://www.serve.gov/?q=site-page/share>)

30 reads

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